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John Lawrence

From a photograph made in L. known 1857

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE

INNES

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NOTE

The orthography of proper names follows the system adopted by the Indian Government for the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. That system, while adhering to the popular spelling of very well-known places, such as Punjab, Poona, Deccan, &c., employs in all other cases the vowels with the following uniform sounds :—

a, as in woman : *á*, as in father : *i*, as in kin : *ι*, as in intrigue : *ι*, as in cold : *u*, as in bull : *ú*, as in rule.

INTRODUCTION

ENGLAND was convulsed under the shock of the outbreak of the Bengal Mutiny. Reinforcements were being prepared with intense energy. Sir Colin Campbell had been sent out to India to take the military command; Lord Canning was at the helm in Calcutta, but the situation was so critical that the post might become vacant at any moment; and the succession to it, under such a contingency, must be settled at once. The man best fitted to deal with the crisis, and available on the spot, had to be selected. It was under these circumstances that the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company resolved, on July 22, 1857, that 'Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, K.C.B., be appointed provisionally to succeed to the office of Governor-General of India on the death, resignation, or coming away of Viscount Canning, pending the arrival of a successor from England.'

This did not necessarily involve the selection of Sir Henry for the permanent post of Governor-General.

But his nomination for the provisional appointment, and its approval by Lord Palmerston's Ministry, indicate the value of his previous services in India, and his fitness for the supreme charge at a grave crisis in its history.

It need hardly be stated that the occasion never arose for any provisional successor to Lord Canning, and that Sir Henry Lawrence had already fallen in the Mutiny before his provisional appointment was made.

His most eminent services were the control of the Sikh Government during Lord Hardinge's rule of India; his part in the pacification and administration of the Punjab after its annexation; his subsequent management of the Rájputána States during a period of controversy and irritation; and his final but short-lived career in Oudh, with his wise and vigorous measures for preparing Lucknow for defence, as a probable centre of war during the ensuing struggle.

(But, valuable as had been his administrative work, perhaps more important at that particular epoch was his position as a leader of a school of Indian administrators. This school, which gave special consideration to the feelings, traditions and modes of thought of the native community, demanded a fair recognition of the claims of native States, and urged the need for wise and generous treatment of the natural leaders of the people and the influential classes, fallen into an unsatisfactory state after ages

of war and turmoil. They also advocated the policy of continuing in a large measure the independence, under British protection, of native States and Dynasties, and of educating their rulers for their position and guiding them in the discharge of their high functions.)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

THE father of Henry Montgomery Lawrence was Colonel Alexander Lawrence, of the British army, a veteran of Seringapatam, who had passed through a career of hard service, wounds, and privations; a typical son of Derry, strong, brave, resolute, peculiarly simple-minded and conscientious—characteristics of which he left the inheritance to his large family of sons and daughters. Six of the sons grew up to manhood, of whom Henry was the third. Three others, George, who was older, and John (the future Lord Lawrence) and Richard, who were younger, were all much associated with Henry during his career in India.

Henry was born in Ceylon on June 28, 1806, and, after the usual education at local schools, obtained an Addiscombe cadetship, and there won his commission in the Bengal Artillery, which he joined at its headquarters, Dandam, near Calcutta, in February, 1823.

During the next year a war broke out with Burma, and he served throughout its full course, including

the capture of Arakan; but eventually the virulent and continued fever of the country led to his being ordered on sick leave to England. After a prolonged interval, with his health fairly restored, he returned to India accompanied by his brother John, now starting on his career in the Civil Service. Henry was duly re-posted to military duty, serving first with a Field Battery and then with the Horse Artillery; and after three years was selected, in February, 1833, for employment in the Revenue Survey.

Five years of service in this department attracted attention to his energy and capacity; and, the troubles with Afghánistán then breaking out, he was appointed to political duty on the Punjab frontier, as assistant at Firozpur to Sir George Clerk.

Here, in January, 1839, began his acquaintance with the Sikhs, which continued for three years, during which it increased in intimacy and thoroughness, especially while serving, in 1842, with their contingents at Pesháwar and in Afghánistán, in the force which, under Sir George Pollock, retrieved the Kábul disasters of the earlier part of that year.

After the close of that war he was promoted to the post of Resident at the Court of Nepál; but at the end of 1845 he was summoned back to the scene of his previous labours, the Punjab; now, however, not as Assistant, but as Agent to the Governor-General; for the Sikhs had invaded British territory, and Major Broadfoot, whom Lawrence was to succeed, had been killed in the battle of Firozsháh. On

the termination of the war Lawrence was appointed Agent for the Punjab; but towards the end of 1846 a fresh treaty enlarged his powers of control over the Council of Regency and invested him with the practical rule of the Province. Before December 1847, however, when all was working well, his health again broke down, and he had to leave for England.

In a few months a rising, nominally against the Sikh Durbar, but really against the English control over it, broke out at Múltán, and gradually spread through the Sikh community; the siege of Múltán growing into the Punjab Campaign, or Second Sikh War, which ended with the crushing defeat of the Sikhs at Gujrát and the annexation of the Province by Lord Dalhousie.

Sir Henry Lawrence, though his health was still far from restored, had hastened out to India, and was present at the siege at Múltán and at some of the later engagements in the war; and, though averse to the annexation, had accepted the post of the head of the Council or Board which governed the Province after it was annexed in April, 1849. His special part in the work of the Administration lay in the political and military departments and the pacification and conciliation of the people.

Here he remained till the end of 1852, by which time the Province was thoroughly settled, contented, and prosperous; when Lord Dalhousie, having decided that the time had now come to place the Province under the sway of a single responsible head,

who must be a trained civil administrator, dissolved the Board, appointed John Lawrence, Sir Henry's brother, to the rule of the Province, and transferred Sir Henry himself to the Agency of Rájputána, a Province of native states, under native rulers, in which there was much discontent prevalent, and at least one burning question was causing anxiety. Sir Henry held this post for rather more than four years, during which Rájputána was restored to its normal state of good-will and tranquillity; after which, in the beginning of 1857, when overt signs of the Mutiny began to appear, he was appointed to the charge of the Province of Oudh, which was already seething with irritation and open sedition. Here too, as in the Punjab and Rájputána, he immediately quieted the Province, restored law and order, and gained the confidence of the people. And, further, he made military preparations forthwith for the war which he saw to be impending, effectively fortified the Lucknow Residency, and was unfortunately struck down in the first days of the siege that ensued.

It was during the last eleven years of his career, from 1846, when he ruled the Punjab through the Council of Regency, till his death in the Lucknow Residency in 1857, that Lawrence's position and services were of the eminence and weight that made their mark on the rule and fate of India.

But he had, from the very first, made exceptionally good use of his varied experiences, military, civil,

and political ; had watched closely and intensely the working of the several branches of the administration with which he had come in contact ; had eagerly studied the ways, and feelings, and modes of thought of the native community of all classes ; and thus had in his later years acquired, as was universally recognized, a perfectly unique influence over the people and an exceptional insight into the defects and requirements of the Administration.

His experiences in the Burmese war, and with the Kábul disasters during the subsequent campaign, as well as in the battles on the Sutlej, had impressed him gravely with the shortcomings in the military system and arrangements then in force, and the chronic dangers resulting from them.

His six years of service in the Revenue Survey, with the close contact into which his methods of work brought him with all classes of the people—chiefs, gentry, and peasantry, official and non-official, the corrupt and the simple-minded—opened his eyes to the benefits that would ensue from a change in the system and tone of civil administration—from the high and dry school, from the oppression of middlemen and of legal formalities, to one of direct contact with the people—which he introduced into the Punjab, and carried out with the strong support and valuable help of his brother John.

It was in those days also that he formed his views of the natural and real relations between the upper and lower classes, and of what was due both by

policy and by justice to the former, wanting though they had no doubt become generally in the exercise of the corresponding duties and functions. Acquiescing also in the policy of most of the older school of Indian statesmen—and markedly of Sir John Malcolm—he was an advocate for the retention, on an extensive scale and whenever just and feasible, of the rule of native states by their hereditary native rulers. His first political employment on the Punjab frontier, when he became the disciple of Sir George Clerk, not only strengthened his views on this point, but led to his prominent position in the school of foreign politics which desired the retention of independent buffer states on the North-Western frontier.

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE



CHAPTER I

THE BURMA WAR AND EARLY EXPERIENCES

As stated in the Biographical Sketch, Henry Lawrence arrived in India as a subaltern of the Bengal Artillery in February, 1823. During his first year spent at the headquarters of his regiment his leisure time was mostly passed in study, in reading historical and military works, and in playing chess. In March of the following year Lord Amherst declared war with Burma: and in that war, especially in its early stages, he learnt lessons and gained experience which, with his thoughtful and practical bent of mind, proved invaluable in the most critical parts of his subsequent career.

A subaltern of only a year's standing, he was placed, on May 24, 1824, in command of a battery of six guns in Calcutta, with orders to prepare to move to Chittagong, where General Morrison's division of the army, under Sir Archibald Campbell, was to be formed. On May 31, he writes:—

‘We were ordered to march into Fort William the next morning to embark in pilot schooners. At nine o’clock that night the order was countermanded, but we were desired to hold ourselves in readiness to march at a moment’s warning. At past nine on the night of the 4th June the order arrived to hold ourselves in readiness to march next morning at three o’clock, which we accordingly did—arrived in the Fort about six, reported the detachment to the Town Major, and he told me that we were to embark at 4.30 p.m.’

But the chain of the task of embarkation was one of many links. All day long he was running about for orders, for bullocks, and for the men’s pay, and could get only two guns on board that night. Next day he got two more of the guns on to his own ship, and the remaining two on to another; but not the tumbrils and ammunition: these the commanders of the vessels would not allow to be brought on board at all. So in fact Lawrence had to rush back to Calcutta, and to worry the high naval and military authorities before he could get all embarked, and to succeed in a contest for the absolute necessities of the Service against the desire of the naval officers to sail light. But Lawrence’s case was not singular; under the Military Board System, the same mismanagement pervaded the arrangements for the whole of the operations; so that eventually, as he writes:—

‘We were six months preparing to move a force of 10,000 men, most of our cattle having been procured from the banks of the Narbudá in Central India, at least 1,000 miles from Chittagong.’

This was his first insight into the practical absence of any organization in the Government departments for the mobilization and movement of troops; a flagrant and glaring evil, which gave the key to his early attempts to attract attention to the subject and to the dangers involved.

Almost simultaneous with this experience was the fact of the misconduct of three Sepoy regiments at Barrackpur, who being under orders for this campaign demurred to the sea trip as being prejudicial to their caste. One of the regiments, the 47th, more mutinous than the others, was paraded and confronted with British troops and artillery. They refused to obey the order to lay down their arms, and were fired into and broke and fled. This provided food for reflection to a thoughtful mind like that of Lawrence.

Of actual fighting and ordinary military operations and difficulties he soon obtained valuable experience. The principal combat was in the capture of Arakan, on April 1, 1825, to effect which six hills in succession had to be taken, in which operations heavy loss was entailed. Of this Lawrence wrote:—

‘The hill . . . was very strong indeed, both by nature and art. It was so steep that it was with great difficulty I could reach the top; so what must it have been for our poor fellows who had a heavy direct and flanking fire to withstand, as well as the difficulty of the ascent? . . . I heard that on the 29th a Sepoy was the first man up the hill, and that just as he gained the top he was seen to roll all the way down.’

He felt and wrote much more; and gave many traits of the gallantry and high spirit of the Sepoys, chiefly Madras men, on that occasion.

Previous to the capture of Arakan, Lawrence had experienced all the difficulties of a march along the sea-coast, with no roads, and countless ravines to be crossed, bordered by jungles which afforded cover for attacks and surprises; and, in approaching Arakan in concentration for the assault, a sharp conflict had occurred in storming the Mahattie stockade, in which Lawrence and his guns had played a prominent part.

No serious operations occurred after this. The Burmese were thoroughly defeated; but peace was not ratified by treaty till the February of 1826. Meanwhile fever, amounting to pestilence, had attacked the British force; and Lawrence, who had been appointed Adjutant of the Artillery Division, and afterwards its Ordnance officer, was seized with the malady. Its severity was so great and its nature so virulent that he was subject to its effects and its recurrence throughout his whole life. A short trip to sea and to Calcutta was found ineffectual to stop it, and he was consequently ordered on long sick-leave by way of China to England.

With this ended his service in Burma and his direct connexion with that country. But the subaltern had sufficiently studied its military circumstances to lead to his addressing suggestions to Government some ten years afterwards, when there appeared to be a prospect of a fresh war with Burma.

The object of the leave which he was about to take being the recovery of his shattered health, he proceeded homeward by a prolonged sea voyage in a sailing vessel, which in those days was recognized as the most effective step to that end. Sailing from Calcutta on August 2, 1826, and going by the Straits and China route, he reached England and rejoined his family in the following May.

Of his life during this furlough, little need be said beyond what has been already mentioned in the Biographical Sketch. But as he felt himself regaining strength his restored energy soon overcame all thought of real rest ; his time was well occupied in travelling, walking tours, studying, drawing, and in pursuit of practical knowledge ; and he also seized the opportunity of employment in the Irish Ordnance Survey, in which the experience gained proved of the highest importance to him in his subsequent 'work in' the Revenue Survey of India.

By this stay in England his health was greatly, but not fully restored. In fact, the germs of the Arakan fever had been so thoroughly implanted in his constitution that he never threw them off, and they affected his strength and his staying powers permanently.

But by the end of the summer of 1829 it was time for him to return to duty ; and he accordingly sailed a second time for India on September 2, accompanied by a sister and his brother John, who had passed through Haileybury, and was now starting

on his great career in the Civil Service of India. They reached Calcutta in February, 1830, and there the brothers parted; John remaining to study and pass in the languages, and Henry going up country to Karnál to join the battery to which he had been posted. His elder brother, George, was there with his regiment, and the two of course lived together. Karnál was in the neighbourhood of Delhi, to which John was posted in a few months, on passing his Calcutta examination. Thus, for about a couple of years, the three brothers were within hail of each other.

For three years Henry's time was spent in studying and qualifying for professional and official advancement. In the one direction he practised hard in the riding school, and qualified for the Horse Artillery; in the other, he studied the prescribed oriental languages strenuously, and passing the tests, bore against his name the magic letters P.C. (Passed College). In consequence of the former qualification, he was transferred to the Horse Artillery in September, 1831, and owing to the latter he was first made Interpreter and Quartermaster to the Artillery, and then, in 1833, was placed on Staff employment and appointed to the Revenue Survey. He had, for a while, during this course of study, spent some time on the canals in the North-West with his brother officer, Colonel Cautley, and had there learnt from him the essentials of the duties and difficulties of canal engineering and irrigation operations.

CHAPTER II

THE REVENUE SURVEY AND POLITICAL TRAINING

Revenue Survey.

~~In entering the Revenue Survey department, Henry Lawrence began a career which was almost entirely spent in direct touch with the natives of India,~~ either the civil or the military community ; losing meanwhile that intimate contact with British troops and their families in which he had been placed during the first ten years of his service. What use he had made of that experience will presently be seen, from the advantage and benefit to which he turned it in founding the Lawrence Asylum twelve years afterwards.

This Revenue Survey, in which he worked for five years, was comparatively in its infancy. It had been devised by one of the ablest of the Civil administrators of those days, with the object of obtaining sound data for the assessment of the land revenue ; the groundwork of which had hitherto been in so chaotic a state as to give great scope for fraud and trickery, and also to inflict dire injustice and hardship on some large bodies of the people, while at the same time it let

others off cheaply, and thus acted with a result prejudicial to the public purse. The Survey was not practically effecting its object when Henry Lawrence joined it; its progress being very slow, and its cost tending to be prohibitory. The dilemma was serious; but his experience in the Irish Ordnance Survey and his energy and judgement came to the rescue. His suggestions, reducing and modifying the details of the work and largely curtailing the supervising staff, were tried and proved successful. With this, his character and reputation were established, and recognized in important quarters; but the real benefit to him lay in the sound and intimate insight it gave him into native life and character. As described by Sir Herbert Edwardes—

‘ Here he first really learnt to know the natives of India, and the best class of natives, the agricultural population. It was *their* villages, *their* fields, *their* crops, *their* interests of every kind with which his eyes, hands, thoughts, and heart were now occupied for five years. Instead of living in a European station, he pitched his tents among the people, under their trees and by their streams, for eight months out of twelve. He saw them as military men seldom can see them, as all civilians ought to see them, and as the best *do* see them—in their homes and daily life—and thus learnt to sympathize with them as a race, and to understand their wants. In many respects, indeed, the Revenue Surveyor gets more at the heart of the people than the Civil officers of the district; for while the Collector or Deputy Commissioner is the chief actor on the stage of government, the Surveyor is not only among the audience in the pit, but passes behind

the scenes and sees the working of the machinery. To him, if he has got any heart at all, come the grey-beards of the village next to his camp, to tell their parish griefs, nine-tenths of which come under one head—the corruption of their own countrymen in office—and the other tenth the blindness of the white Sâhib-Zillah (district officer). And no feature in his latter days was then more marked than the fierce war he waged against all “Jacks-in-office,” whether black or white.

‘Another experience which he laid to heart when a surveyor, and gave vigorous effect to as a governor, was the duty and policy of light assessments, the cruelty and desolation of heavy ones.

‘Another was the superiority of work done out of doors, surrounded by the people, to work done in court, surrounded by untrustworthy officials.

‘And another, which became a cardinal maxim in his mind, was this, that roads were the first want of any country and any government.)

“Push on your roads,” he used to say; “open out your district. The farmer, the soldier, the policeman, the traveller, the merchant—all want roads. Cut roads in every direction.”

‘Roads and canals are not much thought of except as the first conduce occasionally to our personal comfort. The great points, the traffic of the country, the inter-communication of districts, the facilities of markets, and such matters, are generally less considered than the chance of the great man once a year going to shikâr. Who that has travelled much about the country, and witnessed the poor man digging his hackery out of the ruts on the public highway, while shortly after he finds miles of almost unfrequented road in good order, will think this picture exaggerated?

‘Every district should have not only its military road—its *Via Appia*—of the most durable material, connected in ~~all~~

parts by bridges (and not, as is now too often seen, left impassable for two or three months in the year, for want of bridges), but should also have fair district and market roads leading to gháts and marts, subject to periodical repairs, and raised above the level of the country, not made in the beds of streams.

‘In short, by intersecting the country with canals, roads, and railroads, we would get to ourselves an imperishable name, strengthen our own hands, enrich the country, and pay ourselves almost immediately. No more then would famine be raging in one part of the empire while grain was a drug in another. Nor would the detachments be cut up while their supports were coming on at the lazy rate of twenty or thirty miles a day¹.’

In fact, during this period he learnt to know the natives thoroughly, their modes of thought and springs of action, their idiosyncrasies and their prejudices. Sympathizing with them to an exceptional degree, he stored up a knowledge of their wants and needs, their feelings towards their rulers and other sections and classes of the community, their griefs and sufferings from the oppressions of usurers and of the official underlings, and the various drawbacks to their happiness and contentment.

More than all, he became permanently impressed with the keenness of their traditional feelings, and with the conviction that to govern India well and successfully it was essential to secure the confidence of the people and keep in touch with their modes of thought and feeling. He was keenly alive to the

¹ *Biography of Henry Lawrence*, vol. i, p. 121.

folly of despising or ignoring their mental powers, and their insight into the causes, bearings, and results of the actions and measures of the State; and of assuming that their views in these matters were to be disregarded. His tolerant mind condemned the prejudice which the arrogant Englishman was apt to form against the native, and the tendency to assume that English standards of conduct and of policy should alone be used to judge native action and attitude towards British rule.

During the five years of his employment in the Revenue Survey his mental activity was at its height, and, whilst genuinely modest, he was as plain, simple and straightforward in submitting to the authorities his views and suggestions on topics of public importance as he was himself always open and accessible to receiving them from others. Thus, on rumours of renewed hostilities with Burma, he sent up, as before mentioned, a memorandum of suggestions resulting from his experiences of the former war. He wrote, proposing the organization of irregular corps, of which the famous 'Guides' afterwards formed the prototype. He made notes on the Quartermaster-General's Department, on engineers, canals, roads, surveys, statistics, the formation of a Staff Corps, and the like; and such was the tone, good sense and pertinence of his suggestions that generally they were received with favour; except perhaps when, in his anxiety to explain and exemplify his views, he ventured on names and personal recommendations. At the same

time, such disquisitions necessarily involved exposure of assumed defects or shortcomings, and laid him open to the charge of being inclined to controversial and contentious writing. But his truthfulness and generous character, as well as his powerful and painstaking thought, gave them real and practical value, and tended effectually to nullify anything that might have otherwise been offensive in their argumentative aspect.

Political Training on the Punjab Frontier.

In August, 1838, Lawrence's career took an entirely new direction. Military operations in Afghánistán were imminent, and, the troop of Horse Artillery, on whose strength he was borne, being named for active service, he was relieved from his Survey duties and accompanied it to the Punjab frontier, the Sutlej, reaching Firozpur in November. But news of the cessation of the siege of Herát led to the strength of the expeditionary force being reduced, so as not to include Lawrence's troop. On the other hand, the political staff on that frontier, under Mr. George Clerk, required to be strengthened; and Lawrence was appointed to it, as assistant at Firozpur, Mr. Clerk himself being at Ludhiána. This occurred in January, 1839, and was the turning-point of Lawrence's career; thus starting his connexion with the Sikhs and the Punjab, and bringing him into close relations with Mr. Clerk, who was already at that time a statesman of the highest mark.

The Ferozpur State lies on the south bank of the Sutlej, and, along with the other Cis-Sutlej States, had been taken under British protection, in accordance with the agreement with Ranjít Singh. On the death of its hereditary chief, in 1835, it had lapsed by feudal custom to the English, by whom its administration had then to be taken in hand.

This was no easy task, surrounded as the State was, on nearly all sides, either by the marauding Bikanír and other tribes or by the feudatories of Lahore, whose raids, and the rapine and violence that accompanied them, were costing hundreds of lives annually. By the end of 1838 matters had somewhat improved; but Henry Lawrence, on arriving, threw his whole energy into the work, and made such progress with the town and its fort and defences, and so punished and curbed the turbulent and settled the district, that at the end of twelve months Mr. Metcalfe, the Governor-General's agent, commented warmly on the flourishing state of affairs, and the great improvements that had been made. Lawrence had also begun to enter into kindly relations with the surrounding independent chiefs, and to adjudicate by their own request in their disputes and boundary questions. His success was such—notably in the case of the Farídkot State—that applications for his employment on these matters became more and more numerous, and the repute and influence that resulted from it were of great value. Such was his first essay at government; and, dealing as he was

with a new and turbulent race, his success augured well for the future.

Six months after Henry Lawrence entered on his duties at Ferozpur, Ranjít Singh, the founder of the Sikh kingdom, died, and the whole State became agitated with intrigue. This altered and weakened the state of the relations between the Sikhs and the English, and, combined with the war now going on in Afghánistán, enhanced to the utmost the demands on Lawrence's vigilance and energy, as well as tact, in his advanced position on the frontier.

A full account of the origin and past history of the Sikhs will be found in Sir Lepel Griffin's *Ranjít Singh* in this series, and a brief one at p. 45 of this volume. Here it may suffice to say that the Punjab is peopled not only, or even mainly, by the Sikhs, but by many races; Muhammadans and Hindus, as well as Sikhs; that the Sikhs are a military brotherhood, and as such are one in caste; and that those of the Punjab proper, or Trans-Sutlej, had been organized by Ranjít Singh into a compact, powerful, and well-disciplined army. Their bravery and fighting efficiency were well known, but with Ranjít Singh they had been kept well in hand and under the sternest discipline. He had recognized the assured fact of the power and supremacy of the British, and had ever been loyal to his alliance with them, if only as a matter of sound policy. But now that he was dead there was no one ready and fitted to take his place, and the situation resolved itself into, on the

one hand a brave and effective army, composed of a soldiery with complete confidence in themselves, inclined for war, and turbulent, especially now when freed from the powerful hand that had restrained them; and on the other hand, a band of rival chiefs and men of influence aspiring to the leadership, and ready to bid unscrupulously for the support of that army.

This situation was most serious, and Lawrence's part, under George Clerk's guidance, was to watch them all with the utmost vigilance, to guard against the action of the crafty and ambitious, and to guide and support the well-disposed. Sher Singh, a reputed son of Ránjít Singh, became the Mahárájá, after the death of another almost imbecile son, Kharak Singh; and it was during his rule and with his Darbár, that Lawrence while at Firozpur was chiefly connected in other than local matters.

Troubles in Afghánistán.

A special subject of anxiety was the maintenance of the alliance against Afghánistán which the British had made with Ránjít Singh, which he had not really liked, and which had not been popular with the Sikhs, however much they hated the Afgháns.

It had been entered into in connexion with the expedition of 1839, consequent on the anxiety which the British had begun to feel at the advance of Russia, and the significant complications respecting Herát

between Persia and Afghánistán; and now the attitude of the Sikhs in regard to this alliance had become somewhat critical owing to recent events in Afghánistán.

At first all had gone well. The Amír Dost Muhammad's brothers had been charged with treacherous conduct regarding Herát; so the British had invaded Afghánistán from Sind and Khelát by Kandahár, while the Saddozái Prince Timúr, son of the English nominee, Sháh Shújá, had entered it, with his own levies and a Sikh contingent, from Pesháwár through the Kháibar. This was Ranjít Singh's share of the business. The British, continuing their advance, took Khelát-i-Ghilzai and stormed Ghazní; on this, Dost Muhammad fled beyond the Hindu Kush, and the two invading columns, the English from Ghazní and Timúr's from the Kháibar, closed on Kábul, and installed Sháh Shujá as Amír. With this the ostensible object of the invasion and the alliance had been gained. It was then intended to withdraw from the country and leave Sháh Shujá to his own devices; but it was found impracticable to do this altogether, as he had no real supporters, except the troops of his allies. Two large portions however of the force were sent away in October, 1839, one under Cotton by Khelát, the other under Keane by Pesháwár. Next spring more troubles broke out. Dost Muhammad reappeared on the scene, and after some fighting surrendered and was sent in honourable captivity to Calcutta. For about a year there was

superficial tranquillity, but in October, 1841 a real rising began, and with it the series of events which have been referred to as affecting the attitude of the Sikhs. Government had reduced the allowances to the Ghilzai clans for keeping the passes open, and they had then been immediately closed by the tribes. The country forthwith became disturbed; Sir Alexander Burnes was murdered, and later on also Sir William Macnaghten and others; and, in spite of some instances of vigorous action, the weakness and incapacity of the British chiefs allowed the gatherings of the Afghán tribes to come to such a head as to master completely the situation at Kábul.

It was towards the end of 1841 (November 14) that Lawrence, on the Punjab frontier, was the first to receive intelligence of this rising at Kábul. He at once realized the dangers of the situation, the evil effect it was likely to have on the Punjab, unless a resolute attitude were immediately adopted, and the necessity for prompt and vigorous measures. Forwarding the information forthwith to Sir George Clerk, he, at his own instance urged Colonel Wild, at Ferozpur, to prepare to send forward a brigade to the Sikh bank of the Sutlej, in view of an advance towards Pesháwar. Sir George approved; and authority was obtained from the Sikh Daibár for the force to move to Pesháwar through the Punjab, a course which on the previous occasion had not been sanctioned by that Court. The brigade was collected on

the bank of the Sutlej in ten days, and crossing it on December 16 reached Pesháwar on the 28th.

Meanwhile Sir George took another step of special importance to Lawrence, and transferred him to Pesháwar; which, lying on the Sikh frontier of Afghánistán, was now certain to be the advanced base of operations. In writing to him Sir George said:—

‘It is because I feel much confidence in your knowledge of the Sikh authorities, in their reliance on your fair dealing, in your experience as a district officer and a people’s protector, and in your activity and decision to meet emergencies of every shape, that I have selected you for the present to proceed to Pesháwar.’

This was a marked testimony to the sound knowledge of the Sikh character, and the powerful influence with the leaders and the people, that Lawrence had by this time acquired.

He was now to enter on his experience of the Sikh soldiery, and to be intimately associated with them all through 1842.

CHAPTER III

WITH THE SIKHS IN THE AFGHÁN WAR

LAWRENCE accompanied Wild's brigade of four Sepoy regiments to Pesháwar; and there his actual duty lay in direct connexion with the Sikhs, and in giving general aid and support to Major Mackeson, the Political Agent for the Afghán frontier. During the march through the Punjab he was in communication with the Sikh authorities, and was struck with the desolation of the country and the paucity of the inhabitants along the route traversed. He reached Pesháwar on December 28, 1841, but it was not until somewhat later that he heard of Macnaghten's murder and Elphinstone's retreat, which had followed on the supineness, and worse than inaction, which had taken place after the murder of Burnes.

The support of the Sikhs was now of the utmost importance; but, as Lawrence had feared, the events in Afghánistán were telling prejudicially on them. It could hardly be otherwise: they could not fail to see that the British army had been worsted and humiliated by those Afgháns whom they themselves had defeated and expelled from the Punjab. The loan of some guns which was requested by Wild was

declined by the Sikh officials at Pesháwar; and it needed Clerk's influence at Lahore and the Maharájá Sher Singh's own orders to obtain these, as also the support of a column of 5,000 men under Ghuláb Singh of Jammu from Huzára. The Sikh gunners were almost mutinous, mainly from the belief that the guns would not be safe in English keeping; and the Sikh garrison were in an unsafe mood, derisively asking the British officers and Sepoys (there were no English troops present) whether they ever expected to penetrate and return from the passes? At the beginning of January no entry into the Kháibar pass was yet practicable. Alí Masjid, a fort about twelve miles above its mouth, was held only by some Afgháns and Punjabís of doubtful fidelity; and Wild's camp still remained near Jamrúd at the mouth itself. On January 12 the 64th N.I. was troublesome about its pay; but it did not absolutely mutiny, and the matter was tided over. It was significant however of the temper of our own Sepoys there.

Still, on the 15th, that regiment with another, the 53rd N.I., advanced into the pass, drove off the enemy that held it, and entered Alí Masjid under Major Mackeson's guidance. On the other hand, only a small portion of the supplies that were to have accompanied the party arrived with it, the rest having been left behind at Pesháwar. Four days later, a brigade of two more Sepoy regiments and some of the Sikh contingent troops having moved forward with guns to the support of Alí Masjid, the

Sikhs of the party mutinied, and, driving off their own officers, returned to Pesháwar, while the Sepoy regiments were checked, repulsed, and driven back to their camp. Alí Masjid, being without supplies, was then evacuated.

These particulars show the peculiar experience that Lawrence had, from his political position, of the evils of a badly organized and mismanaged force; of disaffected native regiments and disheartened officers: of the captious spirit of the Sikhs towards us under such circumstances; and of the effects of such intelligence as was now being received of the disastrous retreat from Kábul.

But on the other hand was seen the contrasting counter-experience of the bold attitude and vigorous action of the Jalálábád garrison, with such men as Sale, who was in command; Dennis, Monteath, and Mayne with the English and native troops; Abbott. Backhouse, and Dawes with the artillery; Broadfoot as the engineer; McGregor the political, and Henry Havclock the staff officer; each bearing a name well-known for conduct and efficiency. There, in the midst of disaster, they were repelling and countering every attack, fighting and working vigorously, and keeping in good heart and spirits. This defence bore invaluable fruit, not merely from its own successful issue, but from the colour it gave to the situation and its effect on the native mind, especially at Pesháwar, when all else was in the depth of gloom—an uncontrovertible testimony to the paramount and inestimable effect of

vigour and boldness, however hopeless the outlook. It was only by this stand at Jalálábád that Sir George Clerk and his assistants were enabled to cope with the situation at Pesháwar and in the Punjab, and to prevent matters growing from bad to worse during February, while only one Brigade—Wild's—was there.

But at this juncture General Pollock arrived at Pesháwar to assume the command. Ghuláb Singh also, with 10,000 Punjabi troops, reached Attock on February 1, and on the arrival of McCaskill's (the Second) Brigade of British troops, was enabled to send back out of the way the old Najib contingent which had mutinied. After which he moved on to Pesháwar, and appeared there about the 14th; but on his arrival he openly expressed his doubt of being able to induce his army to advance into the Kháibar. The whole Sikh army was sullen, and doubtful of the success of the enterprise, and it was only Sale's attitude at Jalálábád that prevented their active opposition to co-operation with the British. As Sir George Clerk himself knew well, neither Ghuláb Singh nor any Sikh Sardár was competent to command or control effectively the old Sikh soldiery, who had now for a long time past been bullying the Darbár and their own officers. Still Sir George kept up a resolute front, and forced Sher Singh into sending all the help he could to Pesháwar, and ordering his generals there to obey and co-operate heartily with the English.

But it was not until the end of March, when

additional British troops were approaching Pesháwar, and the successful defence of Jalálábád was more and more making its impression on the native mind, that the tide began to turn, and Lawrence's persistent hold on the Sikh leaders at Pesháwar bore fruit. On March 31, Pollock, who had recently arrived, having received reinforcements, moved forward to Jamrúd, at the mouth of the Kháibar; and Lawrence arranged with the Sikhs that they should force one branch of the Kháibar while Pollock forced the other, and that they should then for two months hold the whole pass up to Alí Masjid and keep open the communications with Pollock's further advance. Mackeson had won the Afrídís to co-operate; but Akbár Khán now appeared on the scene. He detached a portion of his army from the siege of Jalálábád towards Alí Masjid to block the pass; but it failed and returned.

On April 5, Pollock, advancing along the heights right and left of one (the Shadia Bagiaree) branch of the pass, turned the enemy's flank, defeated them so effectively as to clear the route, which was seven miles long, and captured Alí Masjid. The Sikh column too cleared its branch (the Jubbákí), which was fourteen miles in length, fought well, lost some hundred men, joined at Alí Masjid, and became entirely altered in their demeanour. Thus closed in success, for the time at least, the prolonged efforts of Sir George Clerk and Henry Lawrence to retain the support of the Sikhs in this war.

The part which they had now undertaken was to

hold the Kháibar and keep open the communications for two months. But at this juncture Pollock, having reached Jalálábád, was shackled by the Governor-General, and barred from forthwith prosecuting his victorious advance. So long did this halt continue that the stipulated time expired, and, although the Lahore Darbár behaved honestly and well, their troops in the hated Kháibar again began to show a bad spirit.

But Lord Ellenborough now roused himself, and offered the Sikhs the possession of the Passes and Jalálábád as their share of the successful campaign. The Darbár accepted it; the soldiery were delighted, and again changed their attitude; and 5,000 of them, under Ghuláb Singh, marched forward from Ali Masjid and joined Pollock at Jalálábád on June 10; Lawrence being warmly thanked by Government, and appointed to the charge of them there.

In consequence however of fresh indecision on Lord Ellenborough's part there was further trouble and danger to be faced. English families and officers were still prisoners in the hands of the Afgháns, yet he refused to give Nott and Pollock definite orders or permission to advance. The following is what he had written on April 28 to Pollock:—

‘The aspect of affairs in Upper Afghánistán appears to be such, according to the last advices received by the Governor-General, that his lordship cannot but contemplate the possibility of your having been led, by the absence of serious opposition on the part of any army in the field, by the divisions amongst the Afghán chiefs, and by the natural

desire you must, in common with every true soldier, have of displaying again the British flag in triumph upon the scene of our late disasters, to advance upon and occupy the city of Kábul.

‘If that event should have occurred, you will understand that it will in no respect vary the view which the Governor-General previously took of the policy now to be pursued. The Governor-General will adhere to the opinion that the only safe course is that of withdrawing the army under your command, at the earliest practicable period, into positions within the Kháibar Pass, where it may possess easy and certain communications with India.’

This for the time paralyzed all efforts towards any further movements to the front. At length however, on July 4, Lord Ellenborough wrote to Nott. allowing him to ‘*retire via Kábul* if he would take the responsibility’; to which Nott replied on the 20th that he would do so, and Pollock, having settled arrangements with him, started with his own force for Kábul on the 7th of August.

A few days before this, two of the English prisoners—Colin Troup and George Lawrence—had been sent down to Pollock with proposals from Akbar Khán. George Lawrence was ill, and Henry had promptly proposed to change places with him; but this was not allowed.

Henry Lawrence, in charge of the Sikh contingent, accompanied Pollock’s advance, and took part in the combats at Tezin and the Huft Kotál, where his Sikhs fought well, and received the General’s thanks :

he was also present when his brother and the other prisoners arrived in camp successfully released from their long captivity.

With the prescribed objects of the war thus obtained, Pollock with all his forces left Kábul on October 12 for the return march to Pesháwar, and reached Jamrud on November 1. The Sikhs no longer cared to retain Jalálábád and the Kháibar, which they had previously accepted, but in the retention of which they now saw no advantage.

The close of the war was marked by a jubilant gathering of 45,000 troops at Firozpur, where a large concourse of Sikh chiefs and their followers attended; and thus, in the beginning of 1843, ended Henry Lawrence's training in his connexion with the Sikhs. He had learnt to know them in the stern and orderly days of Ranjít Singh; then in the period of comparative anarchy when the soldiery rose to practical supremacy in the State; afterwards, and more intimately, during their vacillating relations with the English, when their troubles and disasters gave room for temptation; and finally, he had commanded and led them during the fighting in Afghánistán, and had acquired a clear perception of their faults and character, of their good and their bad qualities, and had become personally well known to them. He had secured the confidence and regard of their chiefs and leaders, first at Firozpur and afterwards in his close connexion with them throughout the later troubles; and he pictured them and their ways in his tale

entitled 'Adventures of an Officer in the service of Ranjít Singh,' usually known as 'The Adventurer in the Punjab.'

Kaithal and Nepál.

After the termination of the Afghán war Lawrence held a succession of desultory appointments for more or less brief periods; but it was in one of these posts—the charge of the Kaithal State—that, having to make a summary revenue settlement, he carried it out so successfully that in six months the number of ploughs increased by fifty per cent. Eventually, however, he was appointed, in November, 1843, to the high diplomatic post of Resident at the Court of Nepál.

His tenure of this appointment lasted for two years, to the close of 1845, and was a period of comparative rest, during which he was exceptionally busy with his pen, and wrote, besides other articles, his defence of Sir William Macnaghten. These contributions to literature will be referred to at length further on¹, in connexion with those periods of his career when his remarks and suggestions were most pertinent to the state of affairs actually in force.

His career at the Court of Nepál was free from any incidents or questions of high importance. But he studied the military character and proclivities of the people, and came to the conclusion that they possessed no power for invasion or aggression; and that the only room for anxiety or need for watch-

¹ See p. 144.

fulness lay in their tendency to combine with the other Northern Powers and make a frontier barrier against any British advance.

It was during his residence at Nepál that the final anarchy among the Sikhs began, when the Nepáls eagerly watched the progress of events in the Punjab. Henry Lawrence, it need hardly be said, kept, on his part, a sharp outlook on the Court, and on the excited feelings of the Nepáls, while closely observant of the proceedings of the Sikhs and preparing in his own mind for their impending outbreak.

CHAPTER IV

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE SIKHS AND THE SUTLEJ WAR

AT this juncture, when the Sikhs were about to enter into that trial of strength with the English which Ranjít Singh had been so anxious to avoid, it may be as well to give a sketch of their past history.

The Sikhs were only a fraction, though a large fraction, and the leading section, of the races that occupied the Punjab. They can and do include all castes of Hindus; but as regards caste distinctions, they form only one caste, a military brotherhood, with one special aim, the military and political exaltation of the whole body, and one special antipathy—that towards Muhammadans. The peasantry—the Ját Sikhs, who constitute their principal fighting body, both horse and foot, are the best class in the community—are generally dull-witted and simple-minded, not good in the council, but splendid in the battle-field. They have come out in these later days at their very best, are excellent cultivators, contented and prosperous in civil life, and unsurpassed as soldiers in the native ranks of the British army. They were originally organized in a few large confederacies, called Mísls, with the head of some particular family

as the chief and leader of each. Six of the Misls occupied the lands in the Punjab proper, i. e. Trans-Sutlej (on the north side of the Sutlej); other six those in the Cis-Sutlej lands (on the south), generally called Malwá.

At the end of the eighteenth century, this system and organization was acting successfully; the Misls had retained their independence, and, when confederated as one brotherhood—called the Khálsa—against a common enemy, had kept them at bay and held their own. At the beginning of the present century, Ranjít Singh appeared on the scene, being himself a leading member of one of the Misls, the Sukarchakia, and through his wife's connexions most weighty and influential with two others, the Ráנגarhia and Kunhaya Misls. His aim was eventually to reduce the power and separate action of the Misls, and to organize an improved and well-disciplined combined or Khálsa army, which should be independent of the Misl basis.

He gradually quarrelled with the other Trans-Sutlej Misls and leading families in turn, and attacked and mastered them. He early got possession of Lahore, and then of Amritsar in 1802; but he had not brought the whole Mánjha district—the great nucleus of the Sikh population—under his sway till 1816. During this interval he had at first made some efforts to include also the Cis-Sutlej Misls and their territory. But their chiefs, having been previously defeated by the English and afterwards kindly treated by them.

had accepted their friendship, and now obtained their formal protection; and Ranjít Singh, acquiescing in the situation, restricted his authority, by definite treaty, to the Trans-Sutlej territory, and ever after remained absolutely true to his alliance with the English.

He now turned his arms against the districts south of the Mánjha and down to Múltán, which was held by the Múltaní Pathán chief, Muzaffar Khán. as Governor for the Amír of Kábul. In 1818 Ranjít Singh captured Múltán, the Governor and most of his sons being killed fighting to the last; and he then appointed as Governor in his place a clever Khatri named Sáwan Mall; after which he gradually reduced the Muhammadan tribes in the neighbourhood.

Next year, turning to the north, he took Kashmir from its Durání rulers, after many years of intrigues and partisan conflicts. Then followed fighting in Hazára, Pesháwar, and along the frontier; Pesháwar being eventually secured in 1833. Two years afterwards he defeated Dost Muhammad there, and forced the Afgháns to retire to Jalálábád.

But he had no desire to interfere further with Afghánistán. He disliked the invasion of it by the English, but was prepared, as a matter of policy, to share the burthen of that invasion and war, though it was against the inclination of his chiefs.

The Punjab was held in complete subjugation under his masterful hand; and the army was a splendid fighting machine, with all the martial qualities of its Sikh soldiery fully developed, and their aspirations

repressed only by his stern control. The influence of their more direct leaders, however popular, was slight compared with that of the great Mahārājā. The discipline was intensely severe, almost brutal; but it was effective for the time, though not of a quality or on a basis that was likely to last, once the pressure of his iron hand was removed.

His kingdom now comprised states extending from Kashmīr on the north to Múltán on the south, and from the boundaries of Afghánistán on the west to the Sutlej on the east, and contained large populations of various nationalities, of whom, however, the Sikhs formed the leading section; and of them the army almost entirely consisted.

But, by this time, i. e. towards the close of Ranjīt Singh's reign, the chiefs and leaders of the nation under him were not necessarily, as of old, the heads of the Mīsls and of the principal families, but included mostly those men of personal weight and capacity whom the Mahārājā had advanced and brought into his court and into high positions, and had enriched with jāgirs, whether Sikhs, Rājputs, or Muhamma-dans. Thus, there were the three Jammu brothers, as they were called, Ghulāb Singh, Dhyan Singh, and Suchet Singh, and Dhyan Singh's son, Híra Singh, who were Rājputs. There were the Bráhmīn soldiers, Khushyal Singh and Tej Singh. There were sundry Bābas and Bhaís, priests. There was the Khatrí, Sáwan Mall of Múltán. There were such Hindus as Dina Náth, Shunkur Dass, and Ajodhya Persad.

There were even notable Muhammadans, such as Nawáb Sarfaráz Khán, Khoda Yár Khán, Fakír Aziz-ud-dín, Sheikh Emam-ud-dín, Khálifa Syad Muhammad Khán, and Syad Muhammad Hussein. With such a widely ranging and diversified list of courtiers, governors, and commanders, besides Sikh Sardárs, and with the conflicting interests involved, in the absence of any strongly recognized succession to the throne the control of the State was not unlikely to fall to pieces once the mighty hand of the great ruler was removed.

Up to the close of the Afghán war Sir George Clerk and Henry Lawrence alone knew more or less thoroughly the character and bent of these several men, and Lawrence alone possessed the necessary experience of their fighting qualities, as well as of their tendency to insubordination. After the great Maharájá's death they were entirely out of hand, and under real obedience to no one, and few knew this better than Ghuláb Singh, their nominal commander. The Court and its supporters had no influence with them, either collectively or individually, and the only person who, in addition to those already mentioned, rose into prominence after Ranjít Singh's death was the Raní Jindan, one of his wives, a woman of the most dissolute character, who had shortly before given birth to a son, Dhulíp Singh. This child was, later on, publicly recognized as legitimate, and in the line of succession to the throne.

On Ranjít Singh's death, in 1839, anarchy, to a

greater or less degree, ensued and continued. One of his sons, Kharak Singh, was the first to be placed on the throne; but he was imbecile and a puppet, and after his death another son, Sher Singh, eventually succeeded—a man who, though of low character and habits, had some sense, and was faithful to the English alliance even through the trials of the Afghán war.

Between Kharak Singh and Sher Singh, Náo Nihál Singh, son of Kharak Singh, had succeeded; but he lived for only one day as Mahárájá; and even Sher Singh, before he was installed as the permanent successor, acted only as a temporary ruler, with Dhyán Singh as the Minister, and Kharak Singh's widow as the nominal and temporary regent. This arrangement, which rested chiefly on the support of the Sindhanwála family, was based on the ground of the widow possibly giving an heir to her late husband. Thus, while Sher Singh was virtually occupying the throne and ruling the State, three conflicting elements were surrounding him—the claims of Kharak Singh's widow, with the backing of the Sindhanwála clan; the aims of the Janmu brothers, with one of them, Dhyán Singh, as the actual Minister; and the pressure of the Khálsa army, with, in addition, the Raní Jindan and her child Dhulíp Singh in the background. These conflicting elements eventually overwhelmed him.

He was, as already shown, staunch to the British alliance, but the Minister, Dhyán Singh, was secretly

intriguing against him for his own ends, and was aided by his clever son, Hira Singh; their policy, backed by the Raní Jindan, being to incite the army to action, and induce them to attack the British.

But, friendly to the British alliance, the Sindh-anwála brothers tricked Dhyan Singh, entrapped him into assassinating Sher Singh, and afterwards killed Dhyan Singh himself; on which Hira Singh, his son, appealed to the army, attacked and killed the Sindh-anwála men, and got Dhulíp Singh proclaimed Mahá-rájá and himself his Minister. But his ministry was short-lived; Raní Jindan, having used him to get herself and her boy Dhulíp Singh into power, threw him over and denounced him to the army, which led to his murder. Thus, after Ranjit Singh's death, his throne had been successively held by Kharak Singh, Náo Nihál Singh (for a day), Sher Singh, and now the boy Dhulíp Singh. But the army was absolutely supreme; such intriguing as went on was with a view to guiding its power to its own destruction by attacking the English. The Khálsa was openly the only authority that Ghuláb Singh acknowledged, while at the same time he shrewdly refused the post of Minister. The army thus getting out of hand, and influenced or incited by the Raní Jindan and the court intriguers, for their own ends as above shown, gradually drifted into the war, dead against the views of the Sardárs and the really natural leaders of the people.

It was most fortunate for the Government of India

that the war, now on the point of breaking out, had been so long delayed, owing to the Sikhs being sufficiently engrossed with their own affairs. During the interval since Ranjít Singh's death the disasters and humiliations which the British had suffered in Afghánistán had terribly lowered their prestige and excited the minds of the native races—of none more so than those of the Punjab. Wars, due primarily to the results of these feelings, had ensued in Sind and Gwalior, in the very year after the return of Pollock's army from Afghánistán; and if the Sikhs also had challenged the British power at the same time, the difficulty in dealing with them, great as it proved to be afterwards, would undoubtedly have been very much greater then. The Government therefore had been sensibly relieved by the outbreak of those other wars thus occurring at an opportunely early date, before the more serious crisis arose with the Punjab.

Of course, they had ever since the close of the Afghán war been fully alive to the excited and dangerous state of the Sikh army and the Punjab, and had been arranging to meet the storm whenever it should burst. Major Broadfoot, who had latterly succeeded to the charge of the frontier, had kept Sir Henry Hardinge, who was now the Governor-General, as well informed as possible of the progress of events, and gradually it became but too certain that a war with the Sikhs was inevitable.

Sir Henry however was determined that the Sikhs

should have no grounds for charging the English with any provocation, and, in accordance with this sentiment, though he continued to bring up troops from all quarters, so as to have a large army ready to advance from Meerut and similar positions, he kept the actual frontier much too weak, and the supports too much in the rear, to meet, with fair approach to equality of strength, the attack that the Sikh army might make at any moment in full force on our frontier garrisons. He thus subordinated the military necessities of the case to political expediency, and placed Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, at a grave disadvantage. Only the Ambála and the frontier troops were held ready for war. The Meerut force was not allowed to move and strengthen the front till the Sikhs should have taken the initiative; even when Ghuláb Singh, the Rájá of Jammu, had sent intelligence to the British of the absolute certainty of the impending advance across the frontier, and had proposed to cast in his lot with the English definitely. Then at length, as the Rájá had said, the Sikh army took the aggressive. The Sikh Sardárs disapproved and objected; but they were patriotic, and joined the Khálsa, though the command was assigned to two men of no national weight or position, the one being Tej Singh, the nephew of Jemadar Khushal Singh, and the other Lál Singh, the favourite of the Rani Jindan.

Hitherto, it must be borne in mind, no one except Henry Lawrence had been in a position to gauge by

sound experience the real fighting qualities of the Sikhs ; and even he had seen them only at their worst—in hill warfare, that is—in which they do not specially excel. It may be fairly conjectured that neither the Government, nor the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, nor their nearest advisers, estimated at its proper weight the gravity of the impending contests in the battlefield, much less of any attempt at a conquest of the Punjab. Hence their preparations were insufficient for the initial operations, and the army in India was inadequate for the exhaustive conduct of the war to its proper completion.

We do not propose to give any detailed account of the campaign, but these particulars of the steps leading up to the conflict are necessary for a correct idea of the conduct of the Khálsa and of the members of various ranks of the Sikh community in coming into conflict with the English Government. It need hardly be pointed out that the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs, whether as states or peoples, took no part in the movement against the British.

By December 11, 1845, the Punjab Sikh armies were invading the British territory in force, crossing the Sutlej by various fords near Firozpur. One army under Tej Singh remained there facing and threatening it, while another under Lál Singh threw up entrenchments at Firozsháh and then moved further eastwards to meet the British army. These two encountered ; and the first important action was fought on December 18 at Múdkí—a severe one, and attended with heavy loss

on both sides. It ended in a victory for the British, who, routing the Sikhs and following them westwards, advanced to the support of Firozpur. Then, at Firozsháh, which Lál Singh had already entrenched, a very sanguinary battle was fought on December 21 and 22, which left matters in a critical state on the night of the 21st, but ended next day in the complete defeat of the enemy.

In this struggle Major Broadfoot was killed, and Henry Lawrence was at once summoned from Nepál to replace him.

The divisions of Sir Hugh Gough's army from the hill stations and from Meerut, which had been held back till the Sikh invasion actually occurred, had been meanwhile advancing rapidly, and now joined in the campaign. Sir Hugh again fought the Sikhs at Aliwál on January 28, and then finally, a fortnight later, after an exceptionally severe and stubborn action, stormed their entrenchments on the Sutlej at Sobráon on February 10. 1846, and drove the Sikh army, shattered, across the river back into the Punjab; which ended the campaign.

Henry Lawrence had meanwhile joined, and was present at Sobráon, where the victory was thorough and so overwhelming as to be decisive; so that the question of the treatment of the Sikh kingdom had to be immediately settled. There were three courses from which to choose: (1) annexation; (2) a subsidiary alliance; (3) the continuance of the kingdom separate and independent, but reduced in military

strength. Both the East India Company and Sir Henry Hardinge were opposed to annexation—a view in which Lawrence entirely concurred—for political reasons such as the buffer-state idea, but also and more strongly because it was felt to be impracticable at this juncture, as the British force was not really equal to the task that would have been demanded of it if the Sikh army, though defeated in the open on its frontier, had resolved on contesting the conquest of the country, and utilizing its strongholds and capabilities for prolonged defence. The idea of annexation was therefore set aside. Next, a subsidiary alliance meant the continuance of the State as a separate kingdom, but with its army levied by the British Government, though paid for from the finances of the State. This arrangement, under certain circumstances, had answered fairly well, but had not been found to conduce to the good administration of the State concerned. So this too was negatived, and the third plan was decided on.

The Sikh army had now been thoroughly defeated in the field, and its patriotic chiefs, though averse to the war, had been chagrined and humiliated by the issue. But the Darbár, on the other hand, whose main desire had been the crushing of the ascendancy of the Khálsa, were inwardly elated by the success of their intrigues and measures. So on the British army crossing the Sutlej, and encamping in the Punjab on February 13, the representatives of the Darbár immediately came forward, and on the 15th made their

submission before Sir Henry Hardinge. They were followed three days afterwards by the boy Maharájá Dhulíp Singh; and, in the sequel, when Hardinge and the army had reached and occupied the capital. Lahore, which they did on the 20th, the Darbár had so far gained their ends.

CHAPTER V

LAWRENCE AS AGENT IN THE PUNJAB—KASHMÍR AND GHULÁB SINGH

Lawrence as Agent in the Punjab.

To carry into effect his intentions in regard to the strength and independence to be left to the Punjab Government, and at the same time to punish the State for its aggressive action, the conditions that the Governor-General demanded were these—the transfer to the British Government of a portion of the Punjab territory, called the Jálándhar Doáb (i. e. the tract lying between the rivers Sutlej and Beas); an indemnity of $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees (i. e. millions sterling); the reduction of the Sikh army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry; and the surrender of all the artillery that had been used in the campaign.

These conditions were accepted, and the arrangements proposed and adopted for the proper conduct of the administration were, that it should be vested in a Council of Regency of leading men, with Lál Singh at their head as Minister, under the watch and control of a British Agent; that, in the case of difficulty about the indemnity, there should be a further cession of territory; and (at the urgent

request of the Sikh Council) that British troops should occupy Lahore till the end of the current year, 1846.

This arrangement, which was ratified by the Treaty of Lahore on March 11, was one of which the success was open to grave doubt; in fact failure seemed more than probable; but considering the importance of the results aimed at, and the evils inseparable from any other scheme, Lord Hardinge held it to be worth trying. What he personally thought of the chances and difficulties of success is shown in the following letter of March 30, 1846, to Lawrence, whom he appointed Agent to carry out the plan :—

‘When I consider the character of the Raní, her minister Lál Singh, and the absence of any man of master-mind among the Sikhs to take the helm at this crisis, I confess I think the probability is adverse to the continuance of a Sikh Government.’

And he had already written :—

‘The Sikh chiefs, excluded from power, will probably intrigue against the Government, and may attempt to excite the soldiery against those who were parties to the Treaty of Peace. It will be necessary to be at all times in a state of military vigilance.’

Lord Hardinge was never weary of requiring that the Sikhs should be led to understand his policy thoroughly.

‘You will’ (he wrote to Lawrence) ‘on all occasions assure the Sikh rulers that, whilst we do not desire the annexation of the Punjab, the Government is determined not to lend

itself to any subsidiary system, and, as soon as its troops are withdrawn, will decline to interfere in the internal affairs of the Sikh State except by friendly councils (? counsels) as in the time of the Maharájá Ranjít Singh.'

Henry Lawrence, as above incidentally noted, was appointed the British Agent. Of the 1½ millions required as indemnity, only half a million was forthcoming. Government accepted the territory of Kashmír and Hazára as the equivalent for the million still required; and then, glad to separate Kashmír from the Punjab, handed it over (for a large price) as a separate kingdom to Ghuláb Singh, the ruler of Jammu, a Rájput who, it will be remembered, had been the commander of the Sikh troops during the Afghán war. This transaction is referred to in more detail later on (page 63).

The Council of Regency unfortunately contained too few of the Sikh Sardárs, and too many of the old Court. It was owing to *their* fears of the Khálsa army that the Council pressed for the retention of the British force; and it was in *their* preponderance, and the consequent tendency to intrigue and to the Raní's influence becoming paramount, as well as to the feeling in the Khálsa army, that the danger lay of the failure of the arrangements. Lawrence's anxieties lay chiefly in those directions. He had good hope that Ghuláb Singh, with all his faults, would be loyal and helpful; and that the Sikh soldiery, and the peasantry from which it sprung, if well treated, might not resent their defeat, as they were brave,

and had been beaten by brave men in fair fight, and not by superior artillery or warlike skill or force of numbers: though as a drawback to this, there were loud murmurs imputing treachery on the part of their leaders. With a misgoverned army '*nous sommes trahis*' is not an uncommon idea.

Sir Henry, now Lord Hardinge, was mainly solicitous about intrigues on the part of the Sikh chiefs; not so Henry Lawrence, who dreaded more the machinations of the Raní and her party in the Council.

The treaty of March 11, 1846, embodying those arrangements, and called the Treaty of Lahore, was signed by the Maharájá, by Sardárs Lál Singh, Tej Singh, and Rám Singh, and by the Diwán Dina Náth. Lord Hardinge's words to the Council were these:—

'Success or failure is in your own hands; my co-operation shall not be wanting; but, if you neglect this opportunity, no aid on the part of the British Government can save the State.'

When thus undertaking his new charge, it may be explained that Henry Lawrence's views, though in accordance with Lord Hardinge's, were based on a far wider range of ideas and objects. Now that Sir George Clerk had left, there was no one there who had such an intimate knowledge of the Sikhs, such an appreciation of their real worth, and such a true insight into their shortcomings and the causes to which they were due. Knowing the chiefs personally, having won their confidence in the Ferozpur

days, and been chosen by them as the arbitrator in their disputes, he was alive to their defects, and to the antecedents which had caused them. Having commanded the men and fought with them in Afghánistán, and seen their demeanour both in Ranjít Singh's days and in the trials of the disorderly times at Pesháwar, and again in the battles of the recent campaign, he had formed a very high opinion of their essential military qualities and many valuable characteristics. He felt that it was all-important to the good of the British rule to avert their permanent hostility, and, if possible, to secure their active friendship, good-will, and alliance.

As recognized and foreseen by Hardinge, Lawrence's task was a most difficult and anxious one, and troubles began almost immediately; these were however suppressed by his judicious management. The Sikh army had first to be dealt with, and was reduced by degrees; most of the men reverting to the plough, and a few enlisting in the British ranks, from which however the mass of them were deterred by the regulations then in force in the British service, about the head-dress of the troops, and the wearing of the hair and beard. The fort of Kángra rebelled and had to be captured; and also a serious 'cow row' occurred¹. But the chief disturbance was the intrigue instigated by the Raní through Lál Singh, the Minister,

¹ Cattle are held by Hindus and Sikhs to be sacred animals, and their slaughter occasionally gives rise to disturbances, which are generally known as Cow-rows.

against Ghuláb Singh's assumption of the throne of Kashmír. The Rájá had, as already described, offered a large price for that sovereignty on its being assigned to the British Government by the Punjab Council in lieu of part of the indemnity ; Lord Hardinge, though there was some difference of opinion as to the propriety of the step, had adopted it, and Henry Lawrence had supported the arrangement. He knew Ghuláb Singh's defects and bad qualities—had he not realized them in the Afghán war?—but he held him to be no worse, on the points in which he failed, than any other who could possibly be suggested for the position ; while he was far superior to them in ability, and strongly inclined to be true to an alliance with the English, and to conform to their wishes and views, as he had already proved before the outbreak of the war.

Kashmír and Ghuláb Singh.

It may be advisable to explain the facts and reasons of this assignment of Kashmír to Ghuláb Singh fully but concisely, as much misunderstanding seems to exist about it. It must first be reiterated that the Punjab could not have been annexed at the close of the Sutlej campaign for reasons already explained. As the Punjab could not be annexed, neither could Kashmír, which lay beyond it, and which was in such an isolated position, that it would have been impracticable for the British to attempt to rule and

administer it with the Punjab intervening as foreign territory.

But Kashmír was a tract of country which it was advisable to separate from the Punjab. Here is what the greatest authority on the subject, Sir George Clerk, says:—

‘As to the policy of making Kashmír a separate State, Ranjít Singh fostered in the north of his kingdom a Rájput Power, because it could have no affinity with his turbulent Khálsa on one side or with malignant and vindictive Islám on the other. Had proof of the wisdom of this measure been wanting, it has been signally shown in his time and ours on four important occasions.’

As to allowing it to come under the sway of Ghuláb Singh instead of some one else, here again is what Sir G. Clerk says:—

‘I have been under the necessity, on more than one occasion, of testing rather severely Ghuláb Singh’s loyalty to us; my belief is that he is a man eminently qualified, by character and surrounding territorial possessions, for the position of ruler there (Kashmír), that all his interests lie on the side of friendship with us, that he will always desire, and some time or other may need, our countenance of his authority against enemies. Their aggressions, whether Chinese or Gúrkas on one side of him, or Afgháns on the other, will be retarded rather than precipitated by his proximity to them in that form. If Rájá Ghuláb Singh of Kashmír ever goes against us it will be owing only to his having been handled stupidly by our Government, or by our officers on the frontier and in the Punjab.’

In transferring Kashmír to Ghuláb Singh, it was still remaining under despotic native rule, but not

becoming liable to any worse government than if it had remained in the Punjab. Misrule did afterwards occur in it; but not worse than under any independent Punjab or other native ruler. Still attempts have been made—obviously unjust—to hold Lawrence (and all who were concerned in the transfer) responsible for that subsequent misrule.

Henry Lawrence's view of the case was given in his article on Lord Hardinge's Administration in the *Calcutta Review*, an extract from which is entered on page 91, and the following letters of Lord Hardinge—extracted from the volume of this series dealing with his rule in India—give his own account of the matter:—

‘It was necessary last March to weaken the Sikhs by depriving them of Kashmír. The distance from Kashmír to the Sutlej is 300 miles, of very difficult mountainous country, quite impracticable for six months. To keep a British force 300 miles from any possibility of support would have been an undertaking that merited a strait-waistcoat and not a peerage.

‘Ghuláb Singh was never Minister at Lahore for the administration of its affairs. Early in 1845 Jawáhir Singh persuaded the army to march against Jammu. Ghuláb Singh, despairing of being able to defend himself, threw himself into the hands of the Pancháyáts and was brought a prisoner to Lahore. He was there treated with great severity; and subsequently, when the army offered him the Wazírship, he repeatedly declined the offer. When the invasion took place he remained at Jammu, and took no part against us, but tendered his allegiance on condition of being confirmed in the possession of his own territories. This was neither

conceded nor refused, as the paramount power did not think it becoming, while the armies were in presence of each other, to show any doubt as to the result by granting terms. I merely referred him to the terms of the proclamation of December, when the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej. Nevertheless, it was clearly to be understood by the terms of that proclamation that, if Ghuláb Singh took no part against us, he was entitled to consideration whenever the affairs of the Punjab came to be settled. It was evident that he had no cause of gratitude or attachment to the Lahore Darbár, by whose orders and intrigues his own family had been nearly exterminated, his possessions taken, and his son slain. During the whole of the campaign he had purposely kept aloof; not a single hill soldier had fired a shot against us, so that the Government had every right to treat with him. They had their own interests also to attend to; which in policy required that the Sikh State should be weakened and that the hills should be separated from the plains.

‘Were we to be deterred from doing what was right, and what had been previously determined upon, because the Lahore Darbár, knowing he had not participated in their crimes, chose to employ him for a particular object as being the man most acceptable to us? Was he the Minister, and were not four other commissioners associated with him for settling the terms of peace? After Múdkí and Fírozsháh the Raní had implored him to come to Lahore and bring his troops to her aid. He sent evasive answers. After the battle of Aliwál more pressing invitations were sent, as he alone, in their opinion, could settle affairs with the English, because he had not taken part against them. He came to Lahore, protesting publicly in Darbár against all that had been done. He accepted the responsibility of attempting a settlement, but required the Raní to sign a paper that she

would accede to the terms which he and the other four Commissioners should agree upon. He had been told by Major Lawrence on February 3, in a written document, that we appreciated his wisdom in not having taken up arms against us, and that his interests would be taken into consideration. The words of the proclamation, dated February 14, were these: "The extent of the territory which it may be advisable to take will be determined by the conduct of the Darbár and by considerations for the security of the British frontier."

'These words were meant to include any arrangements which would render the hills independent of the plains, which arrangement had been well considered before the battle of Sobráon. It was always intended that Ghuláb Singh, whose troops had not fired a shot, should have his case and position fully considered. What act of treason, then, had he committed against the Lahore State? He had done good service to us, which we had recognized before he was a Sikh commissioner. After the war commenced, were we to abandon our policy and to treat the only man who had not lifted up his arm against us with indifference, because he came to head-quarters specially deputed by the Lahore Darbár to confer with us as one who had not joined in their unprovoked invasion? His forbearance was rewarded, because this forbearance was in accordance with an intended policy, and because the charge of treachery could not be substantiated.'

Briefly put, the Kashmír case was this:—In 1846 the Punjab could not be annexed; consequently Kashmír, lying beyond it, could not be annexed. But its separation from the Punjab was desirable. Ghuláb Singh was a fitter man than any other native to be its ruler; it was therefore transferred to him.

It was in connexion with this sovereignty that the Mahārání and her favourite, the minister Lál Singh, began their intrigues. Until now the Governor of Kashmír, for the Sikh Darbár, had been Sheikh Emam-ud-dín, a model Muhammadan gentleman in manners, appearance, intelligence, and education, but with all the evil habits and shortcomings that were apt to be developed in a life spent among the intrigues of Lahore. On acquiring the kingdom of Kashmír, Ghuláb Singh had offered the Sheikh to retain him in his old position of Governor, but Emam-ud-dín hesitated, and under suggestions from Lahore, considered three alternative courses of action : (1) to accept Ghuláb Singh's own offer, and remain as Governor under him ; (2) to bribe the English to substitute him for Ghuláb Singh ; or (3) to oppose Ghuláb Singh's assumption of the sovereignty, which was Lál Singh's proposal to him. He adopted this last alternative, and took up arms to oppose Ghuláb Singh's entry.

Lawrence forthwith pressed the Darbár into collecting a force of 10,000 Sikh and Kohistání (mountaineer) troops, with ten guns, under Darbár generals ; and, joining them himself, marched with them into Kashmír, where Sheikh Emam-ud-dín, instead of fighting, surrendered to him personally. These Sikh troops had recently fought against the British under the same officers who now led them ; and, unwilling as they were in their hearts to support Ghuláb Singh, whom the Khálsa hated thoroughly, they acted ad-

mirably in these operations, and drew warm commendations from Lord Hardinge. This was a great triumph for Lawrence, as a proof of his judgement of the merits of the Khálsa troops when properly managed and of his personal influence with them and their leaders.

Ghuláb Singh was then installed, in November 1846, as Mahárájá of Kashmír; after which, as Sheikh Emam-ud-dín had submitted to Lawrence proofs of his having been instigated to his rebellion by Rájá Lál Singh, Lawrence required the Darbár to bring the latter to trial for treachery to the State.

Lál Singh was accordingly tried in open court, with a large crowd of the leading Sardárs present to watch the proceedings. The Rájá admitted the validity of some of the papers produced by the Sheikh, and, on December 4, an unanimous verdict of guilty was pronounced against him. The Sardárs fully acquiesced in this, and in the necessity of deposing him from his position in the Council and forfeiting his jágirs. The ministry heretofore held by Lál Singh alone was then vested in a council of four, viz. Sardárs Tej Singh and Sher Singh (Attariwála), Diwán Dina Náth, and Fakír Núr-ud-dín, while Rájá Lál Singh was removed to Firozpur, and the Maharání was left without his support in her political intrigues. But a still more important change was impending, which reduced and eventually deprived her of her power for mischief.

CHAPTER VI

THE TREATY OF BHAIROWÁL—TREATY OF LAHORE INEFFECTIVE

THE year was drawing to its close, and the time was at hand when, under the existing Treaty—the Treaty of Lahore—the British troops should be withdrawn. But the trickery that had been going on had prevented the better members of the Council from making that progress in the formation of a strong and stable Government which would enable them to exercise a proper control over the army and the Sikh population. Hence the majority of the Sardárs were filled with alarm at the prospect of the withdrawal of the British troops, especially as the Mahárání now proposed, with the support of Dina Náth, that she should be placed at the head of the administration. This brought matters to a crisis. The Sardárs, with Tej Singh and Sher Singh at their head, opposed her staunchly; and on December 14, leaving her and Dina Náth to act as they might choose, proposed, through Sher Singh, to Lawrence that the British Government should take over the guardianship of the State till the Mahárájá should attain his majority. A Darbár was held accordingly on December 15, at which many more classes of the community than usual were

represented, including not only the Ministers and principal leaders, but petty chiefs and landholders, officers, and even an Akalí. It was announced, on the part of the Governor-General, that he was averse from any change in the arrangement heretofore in force; but if a change was desired, his control must be complete; he must be at liberty to occupy the country with whatever force he thought necessary, the funds needed to meet the expenses of administration must be placed at his disposal, and the rule must be under the supervision of a British Resident, though conducted by the Darbár and its officers. The Mahá-rání was to have no vote in the matter, which must be decided by the Sardárs and the pillars of the State. The result was that—the whole of the fifty-one entitled to vote being present—they decided unanimously and in writing in favour of this new arrangement. Accordingly on December 10, 1846, the details of the new Treaty—the Treaty of Bhairówál—were settled. It was to hold good till Dhulíp Singh should attain his majority. The capital should continue to be occupied by British troops. The country should be ruled by a council of eight leading chiefs, acting under the control and guidance of a British Resident, whose power was to extend without limit over every department. Military forces were to be placed wherever he desired. The first Resident was to be Henry Lawrence, who thus became the real ruler of the Punjab.

This arrangement might be looked upon as to

a certain extent involving the 'subsidiary' element which Lord Hardinge had objected to a year before; but, as a fact, it did not include the combination which he had meant by the phrase, and which he had prominently in his mind as undesirable, viz. freedom of action on the part of the native rulers, and their support by a British contingent, i.e. an army levied by the British but paid by the State.

Lord Hardinge's despatches of September 1846 and the following months show clearly his views of the past management of the Punjab; of the conduct of the Council and others; the necessity for a change; the grounds for the new arrangements, and the steps by which they were introduced. Some extracts will here be useful.

Referring to such success as had been achieved, he says:—

'There can be no doubt of the great improvement of our relations with the people of the Punjab, in this short space of time, which is corroborated by the satisfaction which has followed the assessment of lands made in the Jalandhar and the ceded territories.

'I notice this state of popular feeling, as far as it can be correctly ascertained, not only because its existence is a satisfactory proof that the occupation has been followed by desirable results, but because this disposition on the part of the people to confide in our justice and lenity will be an essential means of carrying on a Government through a British Minister, if such an expedient should be adopted. At any rate you will be enabled to form a correct judgement of the present state of our relations with the Punjab.'

He then deals with the question of the retention of British troops in the Punjab:—

‘In my despatch of the 31d instant, I stated my impression that no permanent advantage to the Maharájá’s interests, or to our own, would be derived by the continued presence, under existing circumstances, of our troops at Lahore. That opinion remains unaltered.

‘I do not think that the British Government would be justified in supporting a native Government in the Punjab, merely because it may conduce to the safety of a Regent, and a Minister obnoxious to the chiefs and people, and to whom the British Government owes no obligations. These are the very individuals who, for personal interests of their own, excited the Sikh soldiery to invade the British frontier; and considerations of humanity to individuals would be no plea for employing British bayonets in perpetuating the misrule of a native State, by enabling such a Government to oppress the people.

‘Our interference, if it should ever be called in, must be founded on the broad principle of preserving the people from anarchy and ruin, and our own frontier from the inconvenience and insecurity of such a state of things as that which, it is assumed, will follow when the British troops retire.

‘To continue to hold Lahore, without reforming the evils so clearly existing under the Vizier’s Government, would not only, if that Government is to remain as it is now constituted, be an infraction of the agreement entered into on March 11, but would, in all probability, be an unsuccessful attempt. If the various classes who now justly complain of the misrule of the Regent and the Vizier find that a British force, in opposition to the terms of the Treaty, continues to occupy Lahore in support of a bad Government, the con-

fidence which we have inspired up to the present time will be changed into mistrust of our intentions; the Sikh troops remaining unpaid would refuse to serve at the distant stations; and, with a British garrison at Lahore, the whole of the country beyond the Rávi would not fail to be a scene of disorder and bloodshed. I therefore adhere to the opinions expressed in my last despatch, that the British garrison ought not to remain beyond the stipulated period, if a native Government continues to administer the affairs of the Punjab.

‘I have, since my arrival in India, constantly felt and expressed my aversion to what is termed the subsidiary system, and, although it was probably most useful and politic in the earlier period of British conquest in India, I have no doubt of its impolicy at the present time, but more especially on this, the most vulnerable, frontier of our empire.

‘The period of the occupation of Lahore was expressly limited to the end of this year, for the purposes specified in the agreement of March 11, namely, that the Sikh army having been disbanded by the sixth article of the Treaty, a British force should be left to protect the person of the Maharájá and the inhabitants of the city, during the re-organization of the Sikh army. By the fifteenth article of the Treaty it was stipulated that the British Government would not exercise any interference in the internal affairs of the Lahore State.

‘At that time, the entreaties of the Regent for our assistance appeared to me not only reasonable, but as imposing upon me a moral duty, exacting as I was at that very time from the Lahore Government the disbandment of their mutinous army. It is true this assistance, and the whole measure of occupation, was no part of the original policy in framing the Treaty, for you are aware that the application

for our troops was made after the Treaty had been signed. But it was evident I had no alternative, if I felt confident, as I then did, that the British garrison would be able to effect its declared objects without compromising the safety of the troops. I therefore did not hesitate to afford the aid solicited, although I did so with reluctance.

‘On every occasion the Lahore Government has been assured that the British Government deprecates interference in their affairs; they have been informed that our troops were ready to retire at any moment, if the reorganization of the Sikh army and the improved state of the country would admit of their being withdrawn.

‘It may be further observed, that the occupation of Lahore could not be considered in the light of a subsidiary arrangement, because the instructions given to the General Officer and to the Political Agent were, that the garrison was placed there to preserve the peace of the town, but was not to be employed in any expedition, even between the Rávi and the Sutlej.

‘The force was expressly given as a loan of troops for a peculiar emergency, and to aid the Lahore Government in carrying out an essential article of the Treaty, which required the disbandment of their army. No payment was demanded, except for certain extra allowances granted to the native troops whilst serving beyond the Sutlej.’

His objections to the continued presence of British troops under the same administrative arrangements as heretofore are thus shown:—

‘If, therefore, the proposals of the Regent and the Darbár are merely confined to a further loan of British troops for six months, on the plea that a Hindu Government cannot be carried on unless supported by British bayonets, I am of opinion that the application must be refused.

‘There has been ample time for the reorganization of the Sikh army, and by proper management the Darbár could have fulfilled the limited objects for which the British force was left at Lahore. The means of effecting these objects had been invariably neglected, in opposition to the friendly admonitions of the British Government. I have not failed to exhort the Vizier to pay the troops with regularity, as the only mode by which the Government and the Army can be on good terms, and without which no efficient service or correct discipline can be expected. Two regiments have been recently driven into mutiny for want of pay—such a course being their only means of obtaining their just dues—whilst estates of large value have been given to the brother of the Maharání, as well as to the relations of the Vizier. It is surprising that, after the experience of the last five years of a mutinous army controlling its own government at Lahore, the Darbár cannot understand or will not practise so simple a system to ensure obedience.

‘It is not necessary that I should recapitulate the acts of impolicy and injustice which have marked the conduct of the Darbár during the last five months. Having a right to interfere by the terms of the Treaty in matters relating to the payment of the disbanded soldiery, I have frequently urged the Darbár to do their duty; and this advice, given with moderation, has led the Sikh Government to make the confession of its own weakness, and to implore the Governor-General to prolong the period of occupation.

‘It is impossible to place any confidence in the professions of the Maharání or the Vizier, that the advice of a British Agent would be followed if the garrison were to be permitted to remain; the British Government would, in such case, be a party to the oppression of all classes of the people. Again, if the troops are withdrawn, we are warned that the country will be plunged into a state of anarchy, and the

destruction of all government will ensue. Neither of these results would be consistent with the humanity or the sincerity of our policy, and they would be equally opposed to our best interests.'

Proposals leading to the Treaty of Bhairowál.

His suggestions for modified arrangements—which resulted in the new Treaty of Bhairowál—were thus explained:—

'The other course—which it may be open to the British Government to take, and which has constantly occupied my attention since September 3—would be, to carry on the Government at Lahore in the name of the Mahárájá during his minority (a period of about eight years), or for a more limited time, placing a British Minister at the head of the Government, assisted by a Native Council, composed of the ablest and most influential chiefs.

'This course, however, could not be adopted, even if the offer to surrender the Regency were to be made by the Mahárání, unless Her Highness' solicitations were cordially and publicly assented to by the great majority of the chiefs.

'If, therefore, the chiefs should not join the Regent and the Darbár in calling upon the British Government to act as the guardian of the young prince during his minority, and to conduct the administration, no attempt would be made to carry such a measure into execution. I should, in that case, scrupulously adhere to the terms of the agreement. Those terms could not be suspended, even temporarily, without some such public act as that of assembling all the chiefs who have an interest in the State through the lands they hold from the Mahárájá; and in any such proceeding the proposal must originate with the Lahore, and not with the British authorities.'

He then supports these proposals, and shows the

difference between them and the 'subsidiary system,' to which he was opposed :—

'The marked difference between the system of having a British Minister residing at Lahore and conducting the Government through native agency, and that which now prevails of a native Government administering the affairs of the State without any interference, foreign or domestic, excepting from the Regent, would amount to this, that in the one case our troops are made the instrument for supporting misrule, and giving countenance and strength to oppression; in the other, by British interposition justice and moderation are secured by an administration conducted by native executive agency, in accordance with the customs and feelings, and even prejudices, of the people. An efficient administration, working satisfactorily, being fairly established, the British interposition might be withdrawn; or, if necessary, it might continue till the coming of age of the Mahārājā, when, as may be hoped, his country would be made over to him in a much improved and prosperous condition.

'The principal means of ensuring a successful government would consist in the strict administration of justice between the Government and the people, in the regular payment of the troops, and the guarantee to the chiefs of the unmolested enjoyment of their estates, which should only be liable to forfeiture on a strong case of misconduct clearly proved.'

The alternatives offered to the Sikh Government are thus concisely stated :—

'If, therefore, the proposal of the Regent and Darbār should lead to an offer to carry on the Lahore Government by a British Minister. during the minority of the Mahārājā, and the proposal should be confirmed by the influential chiefs, publicly convoked for the deliberation of such a measure,

I should be disposed to give to the experiment a favourable consideration.

‘If no such proposal leading to modifications of the Treaty should be made, it is my intention to withdraw the British force from Lahore the latter end of December, in accordance with the agreement. I shall, in this case, have afforded the Lahore Darbár every facility in my power to avert the misfortune which the Vizier and his colleagues anticipate on the retirement of the troops; and you may be assured that, in the transactions now pending, the conduct of the British Government shall be strictly regulated by principles of justice and good faith.’

Lord Hardinge’s narrative of the new or Bhairowál Treaty runs thus:—

‘I stated that it was the duty of His Highness’ Government and the chiefs to decide upon the course which they might deem to be most expedient; but that in these arrangements I could exercise no interference, further than in giving to His Highness’ Government the aid of my advice and good offices in promoting the interests of the State.

‘These sentiments were conveyed to His Highness in Mr. Currie’s letter of December 9, and the answer is contained in a recapitulation of each paragraph by the Darbár, concluding with the request that I would leave two regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry, and a field-battery at Lahore, with Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence as the Resident, for some months longer.

‘Mr. Currie, in his reply to this letter of the Maharájá’s, informed His Highness that the application for the continuance of a British force at Lahore involved a departure from the conditions of the articles of agreement concluded on March 11, and stated that it would therefore be advisable

that the members of the Darbár and the principal Sardárs should assemble, in order that Mr. Currie might declare, in their presence, the only terms on which the Governor-General would consent to a modification of the arrangements, and to the continuance of a British force at Lahore, after the expiration of the stipulated period.

‘The paper containing these conditions was carefully translated into Persian and Hindustaní, and delivered by Mr. Currie to the chiefs, when they met on December 15. For the purpose of avoiding all misunderstanding, the different articles were explained; the Sardárs retired for consultation, and, after some discussion relating to the amount of the contribution for the expense of the British garrison, the terms were agreed to

‘In order to afford full time for further deliberation, it was resolved that the Sardárs and chiefs should re-assemble on the following day, when certain individuals should be selected by themselves to draw up articles of agreement, in conjunction with Mr. Currie and Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence. The chiefs accordingly re-assembled at Mr. Currie’s Darbár tent, at three o’clock of the 16th instant. Each article was discussed separately; the contribution was fixed at twenty-two lakhs; and every Sardár present signed and sealed the paper. All the chiefs, in number fifty-two, on the conclusion of the meeting expressed their satisfaction that the Mahárájá would be under the protection of the British Government during his minority, which will continue until September 4, 1854.

‘At these meetings the chiefs unanimously concurred that a State necessity existed for excluding the Mahárání from exercising any authority in the administration of affairs, and the Darbár and the chiefs have come to the decision that Her Highness shall receive an annuity of one lakh and a half.

‘You will observe, that a British officer appointed by the Governor-General in Council, with an efficient establishment of subordinates, will remain at Lahore, to direct and control every department of the State.

‘The feelings of the people and the just rights of all classes will be respected.

‘A Council of Regency, composed of leading chiefs, will act under the control and guidance of the British Resident.

‘The Council will consist of eight Sardárs, and the numbers will not be changed without the consent of the British Resident, acting under the orders of the Governor-General.

‘The power of the Resident extends over every department, and to any extent.

‘A military force may be placed in such forts and posts, and of such strength, within the Lahore territories, as the Governor-General may determine.

‘These terms give the British Resident unlimited authority in all matters of internal administration and external relations during the Maharájá’s minority.

‘The concession of these powers will enable the British Government to secure the peace and good order of the country—the authority will be exercised for the most beneficial purposes; these terms are more extensive than have been heretofore required, when native States have received the protection of a British contingent force. My motive in requiring such large powers has arisen from the experience of its necessity during the last nine months, and my reluctance on general principles to revert to the subsidiary system of using British troops to support a native Government, while we have no means of correcting the abuses of the civil administration of a country ostensibly under British protection. A British force acting as the instrument of a corrupt native agency is a system leading to mischievous

consequences, and which ought, when it is possible, to be avoided.

‘The occupation of Lahore will afford the means of counteracting much of the disorder and anarchy which have disturbed the Punjab for the last five years, chiefly owing to a numerous Sikh army, kept up in the vicinity of the capital, in numbers greatly disproportioned to the revenues of the country, and by whose republican system of discipline the soldiery had usurped all the functions of the State.

‘The control which a British garrison can exercise in enforcing order amongst the disbanded soldiery will, in conjunction with a British system of administration, protect all classes of the community. The immediate effect of depriving a numerous body of military adventurers of employment (there being still many to be disbanded to reduce the numbers to the limits of the Treaty of Lahore) may be troublesome, and a source of some uneasiness. No policy can at once get rid of an evil which has been the growth of years. But the operation of a system of order introduced into the Punjab will subdue the habits of this class, as has been the case in our own provinces since the Pindárí war, and, by gradually mitigating the turbulent spirit of the Sikh population, encourage the people to cultivate the arts of industry and peace.

‘A strict adherence to the letter of the Treaty, by the withdrawal of the British garrison at this moment from the Punjab, after the avowals made by the Darbár that the Government could not stand, would probably have led to measures of aggrandizement and the extension of our territory, after scenes of confusion and anarchy. This danger was felt by the most able of the Sardárs, and it reconciled them to the sacrifices which the terms inevitably required for the interest of the Lahore State. By the course which has been adopted, the modification of the terms of the

agreement of last March has been made with the free consent of the Sardárs, publicly assembled, who were made fully aware of the extent of the power which, by the new articles, was to be transferred to the British Government.

‘The confidence which the Sikh chiefs have reposed in British good faith must tend, by the unanimity of their decision, which partakes, as far as it is possible in an eastern country, of a national sanction, to promote the success of this measure.’

CHAPTER VII

LAWRENCE AS RESIDENT IN THE PUNJAB

COLONEL HENRY LAWRENCE was now practically the real ruler of the Punjab. The Council of Regency, who nominally governed and in whose name all orders were issued, consisted of eight leading men—Tej Singh, who had commanded the Sikh army; Ranjúr Singh, one of its generals; Sher Singh (Attaríwála), the Mahárájá's brother-in-law; Sardárs Atar Singh and Shamsher Singh (Sindhanwála); Diwán Dina Náth; Fakír Núr-ud-dín; and Bhai Nidhán Singh. Lawrence's influence was such that he secured their assent to his several measures. He selected and employed an exceptionally suitable and efficient body of officers, who fell in with his ideas, and acted in their several districts and posts in hearty accordance with his prescriptions, of which the guiding precept was—'settle the country, make the people happy, and take care that there are no rows.' The genial accessibility, the freedom of discussion, the manly sympathy and the readiness to redress wrongs and evils, united with the sturdy capacity for rule and the freedom from all tendency to intrigue or narrowness of demeanour or

control that were found to prevail, won in a marvellous degree the feelings of all classes of the people, Sardárs, chiefs, landholders, and peasantry alike, and secured their devotion to a number of the officers, as notably to Abbott in Hazára, Lumsden in Yusufzai, and John Nicholson and Edwardes on the Indus.

But with all the resulting success and personal popularity Lawrence could not escape from many serious dangers and difficulties. The Rání, as before, was in the forefront of the mischief. First she devised what was known as the Preyma plot, of which the chief aim was the assassination of Tej Singh, whom she hated; further she tried sedulously to corrupt the British Sepoy troops; and later on, a suspicious correspondence was detected with Mulráj, the Governor—and afterwards the rebel—of Múltán. So she was separated from her son, Dhulíp Singh, and removed to Firozpur, and eventually to Benares; and nothing further came, at the time, of any intrigue that may have been going on with Mulráj, as the conduct of all in high places was carefully watched. At the same time, Henry Lawrence had been obliged to check and thwart Mulráj in efforts which he had made to override the Council respecting his governorship of Múltán and its accounts.

But the matter that demanded the most sedulous and vigilant attention was the temper of the soldiery and of the warlike members of the community.

Lawrence's letter of June 2, 1847, will best show this, and that it had till then been dealt with effectively.

‘With the experience,’ he wrote, ‘of fourteen months, I can certify to this people having settled down in a manner that could never have been hoped or believed of them; but they have not lost their spirit. . . . A large majority of the disbanded soldiers have returned to the plough or to trade, but there are still very many floating on the surface of society; and such is the fickleness of the national character, and so easily are they led by their priests and pundits, and so great is their known pride of race and of a long unchecked career of victory, that if every Sardār and Sikh in the Punjab were to avow himself satisfied with the humbled position of his country, it would be the extreme of infatuation to believe him, or to doubt for a moment that, among the crowd who are loudest in our praise, there are many who cannot forgive our victory or even our forbearance, and who chafe at their own loss of power, in exact proportion as they submit to ours.

‘At no period of Anglo-Indian history has any great conquest or crisis been immediately followed by complete peace and security in the countries annexed to our dominion, or by the universal good-will of a people whom we have beaten in the field.’

Such was, perhaps, the greatest difficulty Henry Lawrence had to face. But he had faced and dealt with it and all other difficulties successfully, though only by the exercise of the utmost care, vigilance, and sagacity, as well as vigour and common sense.

By the middle of 1847, however, his health began to give way seriously. A short spell of leave from August to October was tried and found to be insufficient, and after a few weeks he had to turn his face again towards England. At this period, however, all

seemed to be well and to promise well. A real peace was reigning in the Punjab, to which it had long been a stranger. The population had settled down, and were obviously feeling the advantages of orderly rule; the Sardárs appeared loyal, and the Khálsa were no longer showing signs of any tendency to aggression.

Still, in the same letter of June 2 from which we have already quoted, he points out the springs of disaffection and danger that were still in force and must be watched and met:—

‘Our position at Lahore will always be a delicate one; benefits are soon forgotten, and little gratitude is to be expected. Moreover, there are the daily refusals, the necessary resumptions, the repressing or patching up of squabbles, all leaving behind them more or less of ill-will, paltry enough in detail, but, in the mass, sufficient to affect for years to come the movements of any honest administration of the Punjab. It was but the other day reclaimed from a state of the most ignorant barbarism, and has been but little subjected to the wholesome restraints of a regular government.’

During his short leave his brother John acted for him. Henry had written of him as his chief help, without whom he should have difficulty in carrying on, and he hoped that he would be allowed to rule for him in his absence in England. But this was not to be. Sir Frederick Currie, the Foreign Secretary, was appointed to the post.

This rule under Henry Lawrence’s direct guidance lasted for little more than six months, and, though carried out, by the selected officers referred to, in some